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ABSTRACT

The Career Awareness Program (CAP) not only showed how improved school-community relations impact on quality instruction and student growth, but also resulted in identification of variables which affect curriculum change and program development in small, rural schools; these variables were administrative philosophies, community attitudes and resources, consultants, goals and objectives, in-service training, instructional materials, school system size, money, personnel, time, and school boards. Emphasis in CAP was on (1) career awareness through instructional lessons (including "quick cards" detailing concept, purpose, activities, and evaluation for 114 local careers); (2) career counseling through self and other awareness processes, career exploration, and pre-worksite placement seminars; (3) worksite training; (4) use of community people as guest speakers, field trip guides, mini course instructors and skills development supervisors, worksite instructors, and consultants for in-service teacher training. Evaluation showed direct exposure to community resources positively affected career awareness development and expanded learning opportunities and vocational skills development, and the on-going career awareness program positively affected career decision making. (RS)

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A PERSPECTIVE OF CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL SCHOOLS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Richard Peters has been the administrator/director of the New Hampshire School Supervisory Union 58 Experimental Schools (ES) project since July 1973.

The Union 58 ES project, one of ten such R & D programs funded by the National Institute of Education (NIE), has been directly involved with instructional program planning - development - implementation - evaluation - and revision in (K-12) career/vocational education, language arts, and environmental/outdoor education as well as teacher in-service training.

Mr. Peters received his Bachelor of Science in Education and Masters of Education degrees from The University of Maine (Orono); pursued doctoral studies at The Florida State University (Tallahassee); and was granted the Doctor of Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction by The University of Rochester (NY).

Dr. Peters has been a classroom teacher (grades 5-12); an ESEA Title III project curriculum coordinator; a grades 9-12 department chairman; a summer session instructor at The University of Maine; a supervisor of student teachers at The University of Rochester; and administrator/director of the Experimental Schools project.

Dr. Peters is a member of Delta Tau Kappa (The Florida State University) and Alpha Kappa Delta (The University of Southern California). He is a past member of two national level advisory committees for the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS); *instructional media* and *curriculum*.

In 1973 the National Institute of Education (NIE) funded ten rural school oriented Experimental Schools (ES) projects nationwide. New Hampshire School Supervisory Union 58 was the site for an ES project (1973-1978).

Based upon a community/school needs assessment (1972-1973) it was determined that the local ES project would concentrate its program development efforts in three component areas: career education, language arts, and environmental/outdoor education.

From July 1973 through June 1978 the local ES project staff was involved in K-12 instructional program planning - development - implementation - evaluation - revision, change process monitoring and documentation, and related in-service training.

The locally developed Career Awareness Program (CAP) consisted of five separate, but interrelated, parts:

.K-12 career awareness and exploration;

.career counseling;

.student skills training;

.the utilization of community resources in the instructional process; and

.program evaluation.

I. THE CAREER AWARENESS PROGRAM: Student Exposure to the World of Work

In order for students to be properly prepared for entry into the world of work there is a need for them to possess positive work attitudes, behaviors and values as well as an awareness and knowledge of diverse careers.

The basic goal of the Career Awareness Program (CAP) is student career awareness, exploration, and vocational skills training via instructional lessons and units, field trips, guest speakers, mini courses, career counseling, and worksite placement.

QUICK CARDS. A total of one hundred and fourteen (114) locally developed career education activities have been collected into a series of 5 x 8 inch CAP QUICK CARDS. These cards form the basis for the local program of instruction. (See Diagram I)

FIELD TRIPS. Student excursions into the community for purposes of exploring world of work careers and occupations in real work environments.

GUEST SPEAKERS. In the case of those resource sites, people, and world of work processes not readily accessible to students, community resource people visit classrooms to discuss their careers and occupations as well as related educational preparation and skills training requirements with students.

MINI COURSES. Elective ten week long courses related to student skills development in vocational areas such as building trades, cake decorating, child growth and development, small engine repair, and surveying. Community resource people, as well as members of the school faculty, serve as skills training instructors.

WORKSITES. Schools cannot duplicate the real world of the community. Worksite experiences serve to provide students with opportunities to investigate careers and occupations of particular interest to them, to gain exposure to real world

of work settings, and to learn and apply pre-employment marketable skills under real working world conditions.[1] Skilled site workers serve as student skills training supervisors. Community resource sites and people compliment and supplement the instructional faculty and facilities as well as processes of the school(s).

CAREER GUIDANCE. An on-going (K-12) process of student *self* and *other* awareness as well as the development of work oriented attitudes, behaviors, and values. A series of activities including small group discussions, simulated work role playing, meeting with career resource people, field trip tour observations, and pre-worksite placement seminars with building level guidance counselors and contracted services personnel from a regional mental health agency.

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[1]Richard Peters, "Student Worksite Placement for Skills Training and Attitude Development," The Career Education Workshop, Parker Publishing Company, West Nyack, New York, February 1978, pg. 3.

II. CAREER COUNSELING: Preparation for World of Work Career Roles

As defined locally, career counseling is an on-going process of helping students explore the world of work: assisting them in learning more about careers and occupations of personal interest to them; learning marketable vocational skills; and developing work oriented attitudes, behaviors, and values which will provide the basis for success in the world of work.

The local CAP Program is based upon the premise that it is equally important to keep a job as it is to obtain one. Work oriented attitudes, behaviors, and values are important variables which determine greatly an individual's success at maintaining his or her career status within the world of work.

The career counseling process consists of:

- a Kindergarten through grade six *self* and *other* awareness process -- the intent being to develop within the mind of each child his or her relationship(s) to other humans and society. Classroom teachers and contracted services personnel from a regional mental health agency work together, on a

continuous basis, to affect awareness of self and others.

.an exploration of diverse careers and occupations as related to the local community among students in grades three through six. Classroom teachers and community resource people/places are involved in this awareness/exploration process. Significant instructional materials are also employed in this process.

.individual and small group career counseling sessions for students in grades seven through twelve. Building level guidance counselors supervise these activities. Occassionally, teachers and community resource people are involved in the student self/career exploration process re: attitudes, behaviors, and work related values.

.pre-worksite placement career guidance seminars for those students about to be placed at area resource sites for purposes of vocational skills training and application. Building level guidance counselors and contracted services personnel from a regional mental health agency work together to affect student attitudes, behaviors, and values re: the world of work.

III. STUDENT WORKSITE TRAINING: The Use of Community Resources to Affect Vocational Skills Development

No simulated work environment can adequately replicate the real world of work environment(s) of community resource sites.

Only as a result of direct exposure to and interaction with real work environments can students learn and apply marketable vocational skills -- under the tutelage and supervision of skilled community resource people.

The intent of worksite training is to expose students to work conditions in real work environments. There are two types of students which are placed at area worksites:

- those who have taken elective mini courses and/or observed people at work. These students arrive at worksites equipped, to varying degrees, with some basic skills, and are capable of being assigned job tasks from the first day on site. New skills are learned and previously learned skills are reinforced through application on-the-job.

- those students who do not possess basic skills when being placed on-site. These students need a high degree of supervision. Skills are learned and reinforced through application on-the-job.

Both student and site supervisor evaluations of field based experiences indicate that:

.exposure to real work environments enhances students' skills development;

.students learn from supervisors and from fellow workers; and

.site placement experiences make school based vocational skills training relevant to career development in chosen fields of endeavor.

The incorporation of community resource sites and people into the instructional process provides for 1) the addition of skilled craftsmen/workers to the instructional staff of the school(s), 2) supplementation of existing instructional facilities of the schools, and 3) expanded skills development opportunities for students.

America's public schools cannot be expected to provide all the kinds of career decision making experiences and information essential to all students because they do not possess the quantity of appropriate staff, tools, facilities, materials, and other resources needed to do the job right.

IV. THE UTILIZATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN THE CAREER EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS: Linkage With The World of Work

The utilization of community resources; both people and places, is essential to the process of student career awareness, exposure, and skills training.

Community resource people can serve as worksite instructors and supervisors (the field based staff) and sites can provide students with opportunities to learn and apply skills in real world of work settings (the field based classrooms). In short, community resources people and sites become extensions of the classroom into the community.

As part of the Career Awareness Program (CAP) community resource people serve the instructional process as:

.guest speakers into classrooms;

.field trip site tour guides;

.elective mini course instructors and skills development supervisors;

.worksite instructors and skills supervisors; and

.consultants to the teacher in-service training program.

Both schools and students belong to a much large social order called the community. Learning in isolation from the

community is not relevant to students' career needs. In order to possess a realistic awareness of diverse careers and to make wise career decisions students must have direct exposure to and interaction with the community based world of work.

No simulated work environment can adequately replicate the social interactions which occur at a given work place. Nor can simulated activities properly expose student trainees to the day-to-day give-and-take of tasks accomplishment on the job.

V. PROGRAM EVALUATION: Assessing the Value of the Career Education Process

During the course of the 1974-1975 and 1975-1976 school years of Union 58 Experimental Schools project conducted a short term longitudinal study among selected students for purposes of determining the effect of the CAP program on their career awareness and decision making abilities.[2/3]

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[2]Richard Peters and L. Timothy Fisher. The Utilization of Natural, Social and Human Community Resources in the Process of Student Career Awareness Development (Paper Presentation) Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Assoc., San Francisco, April 1976.

The Cornell Career Awareness Inventory (CAI) and CTB/ McGraw-Hill's Career Maturity Inventory (CMI) were used as the data collection instruments.

Results of the study indicated that:

- direct student exposure to community resources; both people and places, had a positive effect on career awareness development;
- continuous involvement in an on-going process of career awareness, exploration, and skills training had a positive effect on students' career decision making; and
- the incorporation of community resource people and sites into the instructional process provided the basis for expanded student learning opportunities and vocational skills development.

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[3]Richard Peters and L. Timothy Fisher. A Process for Affecting Student Career Maturity Development in a Rural Schools System (Experimental Schools Program, NH School Union 58) 1976.

Reality Variables

As a result of ES project instructional program development activities in NH School Union 58 several reality variables were identified which do have direct and indirect cause-and-effect upon curriculum change as well as instructional program development.

Several reality variables have been identified and defined in alphabetical order. No particular significance should be given to the order in which the several variables are listed. Each variable should be assessed and assigned importance, as well as position in rank order, based upon the circumstances of each unique curriculum change situation in which they are found to exist.

Administrative/Supervisory Philosophies

What are the purposes of the educational system? Do the schools serve students? All of the students? What role(s) does the teacher play in the change process? These are but a few of the questions which must be raised in regard to local school system administration when planning for change.

The administration must support a system of management and supervision which is conducive to planned change. Without the support of the central office and building levels of administration change will not occur nor can it be institutionalized.

Community Attitudes

Periodic assessments of the climate of the community attitude are necessary in order to know what people expect from their schools, and what they are willing to give to their schools in the form of morale support, finances, and program materials.

Community Resources

What is available in the way of community people and places to assist in the process of change and instructional program enrichment? How can resources be utilized in the learning process? How can community resources be used to expand the instructional curriculum of the school? There is a need to assess the availability of resources in the community and to develop a resource directory.

Consultants

Experts in several subject matter content areas as well as in instructional methodologies and strategies can be incorporated into the change process and can work with teachers in in-service training situations. Community resource people can also serve teachers re: the development of community based courses of instruction.

Goals and Objectives

Clearly stated reasons for course/program existance within the curriculum, as well as explainations of what will happen *to students* and *for students* in the process of content and skills development.

In-Service Education

Teachers need to be involved in an on-going process of content and skills enrichment as well as their exposure and content/skills training in new curriculum areas. In-service training provides teachers the opportunity to keep up with change and innovation in their subject matter areas as well as within general areas of education.

Instructional Materials

Hardware and software items are essential to the process of change as it relates to student instruction and learning. These materials can be commercial or teacher-made in nature and may be found within the community as well as in the schools.

Location

The degree of compactness of a school system is an important consideration whenever planning for change. The physical organization of a system which is spread out over several square miles hinders the process of teacher interaction for purposes of curriculum planning and development. In those systems containing several schools supervisory personnel is necessary in order to enhance coordination and to affect change.

Money

The necessary evil. Sufficient funds must be budgeted in order for the change process to take place. Without adequate funds for in-service training, consultants, materials, etc. the change process will fail.

Personnel

When planning for change there is a need to assess the strengths of the present staff re: change in the instructional process. Can the present staff adequately affect change? Are the basic skills necessary for change to occur to be found among school system personnel? What must be done to prepare the staff for their direct involvement in the change process? What are teacher's attitudes toward change? Is there a staff level commitment to change?

School Boards

As representatives of the local communities, school boards must be solidly behind the process of change if it is to be successful. Commitment to change must not only be verbalized but must also be demonstrated on occasion.

Time

The most critical of all the variables. Sufficient amounts of time must be budgeted in order that change can take place in an orderly fashion. Permanent change requires planning - development - implementation - evaluation - and

evaluation - and revision. This process cannot take place overnight. Change is an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary process.

STATEMENT

Too often, schools and committees do not establish and maintain avenues of communication or cooperation. The goals of the communities and their schools often do not blend into a harmonious effort to provide youth with quality education. (See Diagram II)

There is a need to budge both the perceived and physical gap(s) between schools and communities. The curriculum can become the area of common interest of both schools and communities; thus providing a budge for better *school-community* relations. The end result is an alignment of school-community goals re: quality instruction and student growth. (See Diagram III)

DIAGRAM I: Career Awareness Program QUICK CARD

Sample Lesson (Grades 4-6)

Career Cluster: COMMUNICATION and MEDIA Grade Range: 4-6

Concept: Communications as an industry in American society.

Purpose: To acquaint students with the communications industry and related careers and occupations.

Activities:

1. Students are assigned to listen to radio and television news broadcasts. They are to compare styles of presentation of radio and television newscasters.
2. In class, students compare broadcaster styles and discuss their impressions of radio and television programs in general. Related careers and occupations are discussed.
3. Students are assigned to critique mass media publications. Related careers and occupations are discussed.
4. In class, students discuss the composition of mass media publications. Related careers and occupations are discussed.
5. Guest speakers from the communication and media career cluster discuss their jobs with students re: work tasks, training and practical experience(s).
6. Students are taken on field trips to area radio/television stations as well as to newspaper offices to observe communication/media careers and occupations in action.
7. Both in the classroom and on tours, students make motion pictures, slides, or video tapes of activities.
8. Students role play careers and occupations. These activities can be video taped.

Evaluation:

1. Student role playing activities.
2. Questions asked guest speakers.
3. Assignments and follow-up discussions.

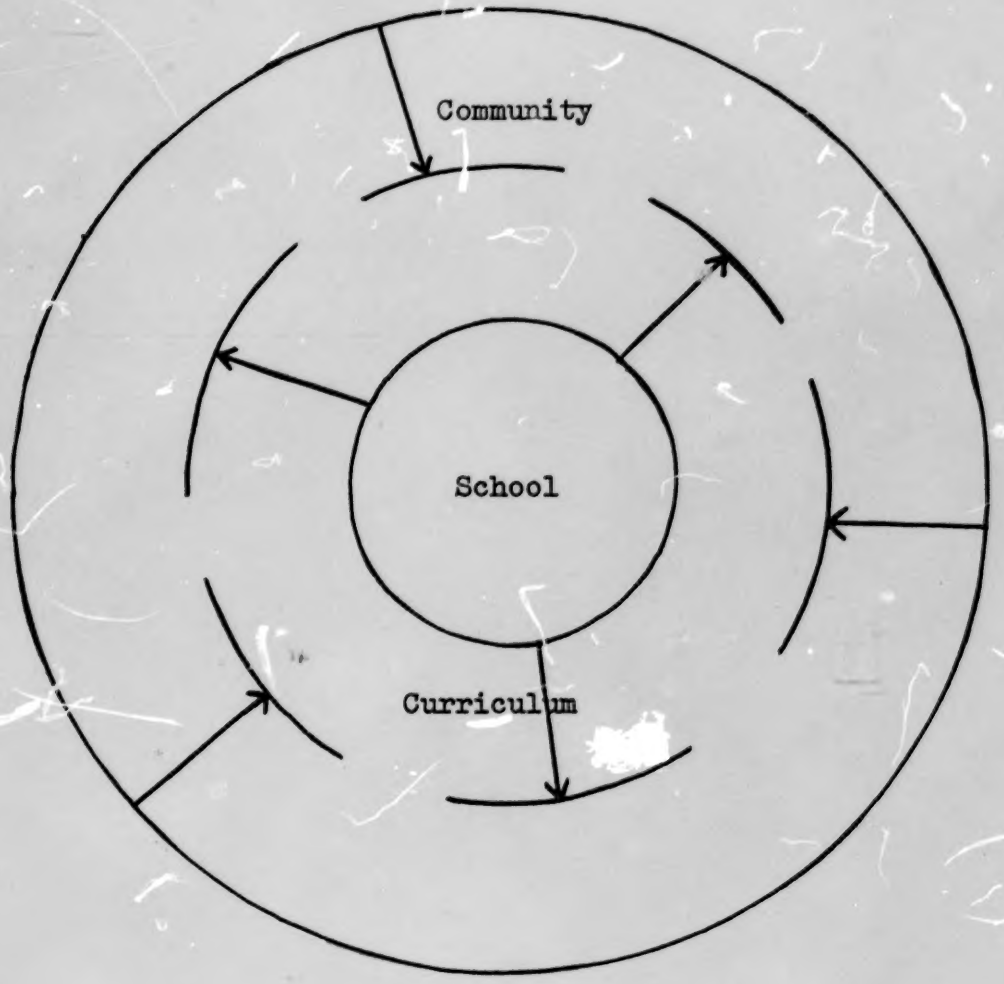

DIAGRAM II: Non-alignment of School - Community Goals

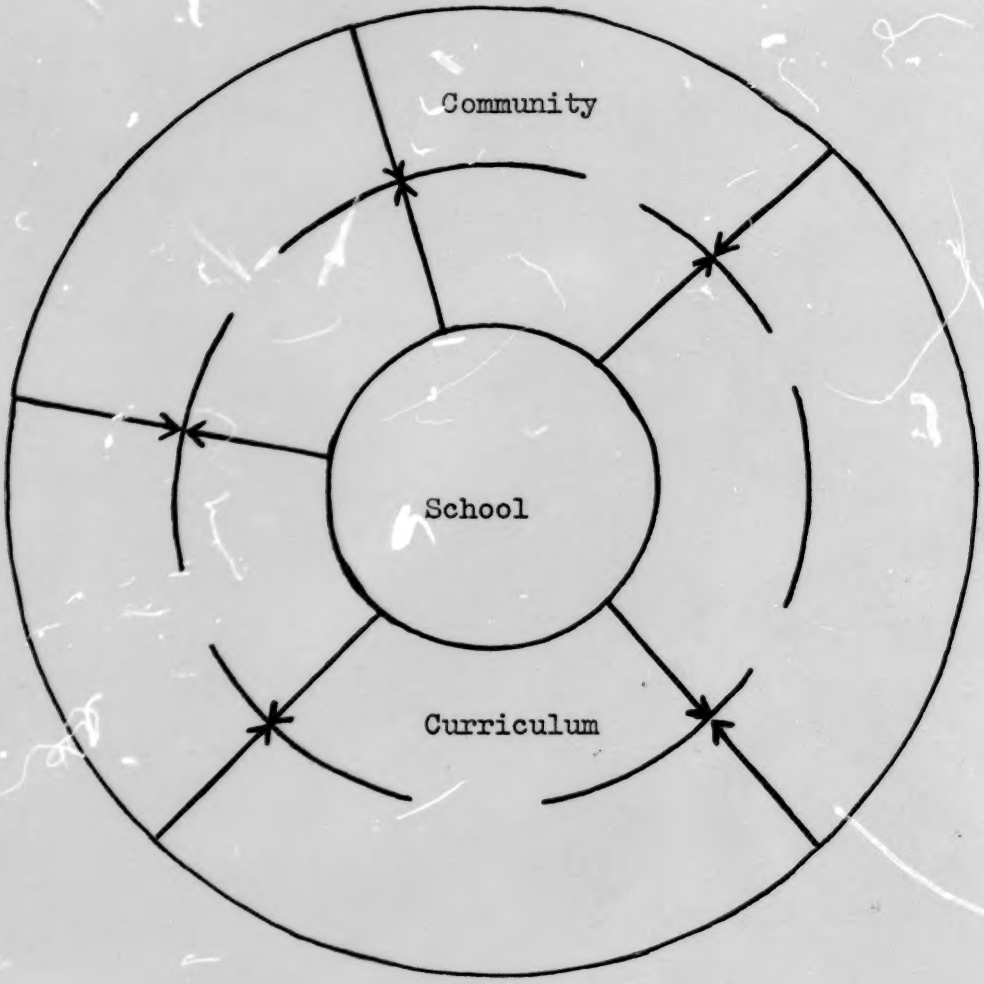

DIAGRAM III: Alignment of School - Community Goals